

HOW TO START A GROVE,



WILSON & TOOMER FERTILIZER CO.
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

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THIRD EDITION

How to Start a Grove

IN sending out this little book we endeavor to answer some of the questions asked by a great many people who want to start a grove but know nothing of the conditions to be found in Florida.

“A good beginning makes a good ending,” applies to citrus groves as it does to anything else. The directions that we give are the result of many years work with citrus trees from the beginning of the orange industry down to the present time.

The first step is to choose the land. Our high, rolling pine lands and hammocks, well drained, give the best situation for the grove, and when such lands can be found on the south side of a lake, it adds much to their value because of the protection from frost that sometimes nips the young trees.

Good groves are found all over the State, however, from high hickory ridges to flat woods and muck swamps that have been given the proper drainage and care.

It is a mistake to go too far from transportation, for fruit and fertilizers are heavy to haul and the extra cost of hauling will soon offset any saving in price of land, without mentioning many other inconveniences.

After choosing the location the land must be cleared. Sell the trees that will do for lumber to some sawmill if possible. Save the dead heart pine for posts with which to fence the land.

Dynamite and burn all the stumps and parts of the trees that can not be otherwise utilized. Grub the land thoroughly, and burn the roots.

Drainage is a most important point and one that is often neglected. Besides actually rotting

away the lower roots, great damage is done by excess of water through killing the soil bacteria so necessary to assist in the assimilation of plant food; and besides, where water from uncleared lands is allowed to seep through the cleared portions it brings with it the poison given off by the roots of the wild vegetation. If Nature has not provided thorough drainage, man must do so before he can meet with any degree of success. We can give no directions as to size of ditches or distance between them, as each drainage system must be laid out according to local conditions. This work can be done after the clearing, or at the same time by another set of men.

When one can do so, it is better to have this clearing and ditching done in the winter. In the early spring spread broadcast about two tons of crushed limestone to the acre of high land or three tons on low land and harrow in. Then plant cowpeas. The lime will hasten the rotting of the wild roots that are sure to be left in the ground, be the clearing done with the greatest of care, and will neutralize the acidity created by their decay. Nearly all Florida soils are very deficient in base and the citrus grower must ever be watchful to prevent the occurrence of acid conditions. The cowpeas will take from the new land to a great extent the properties not congenial to the trees and also will add both nitrogen and humus to the soil. In the fall they should be mowed or disked and when thoroughly dried either plowed under or chopped in with a cutaway harrow.

If the land is not perfectly drained *naturally* it is well to plow it in beds twenty-five or thirty feet wide. Harrow the beds smooth, but leave a deep furrow between them to carry off the water.

Very low lands can be utilized for citrus groves if they are properly ditched and bedded up.

Stake off the places for the trees. There is a wide range of opinion as to how far apart trees should be planted. It is essential that the roots have plenty of room in the ground and the branches plenty of sunlight if the trees are to be in the healthiest condition. A good average distance is twenty-five feet for budded orange trees or thirty feet for grapefruit. Around each stake spread a peck of hard wood ashes to insure the soil being perfectly sweet.

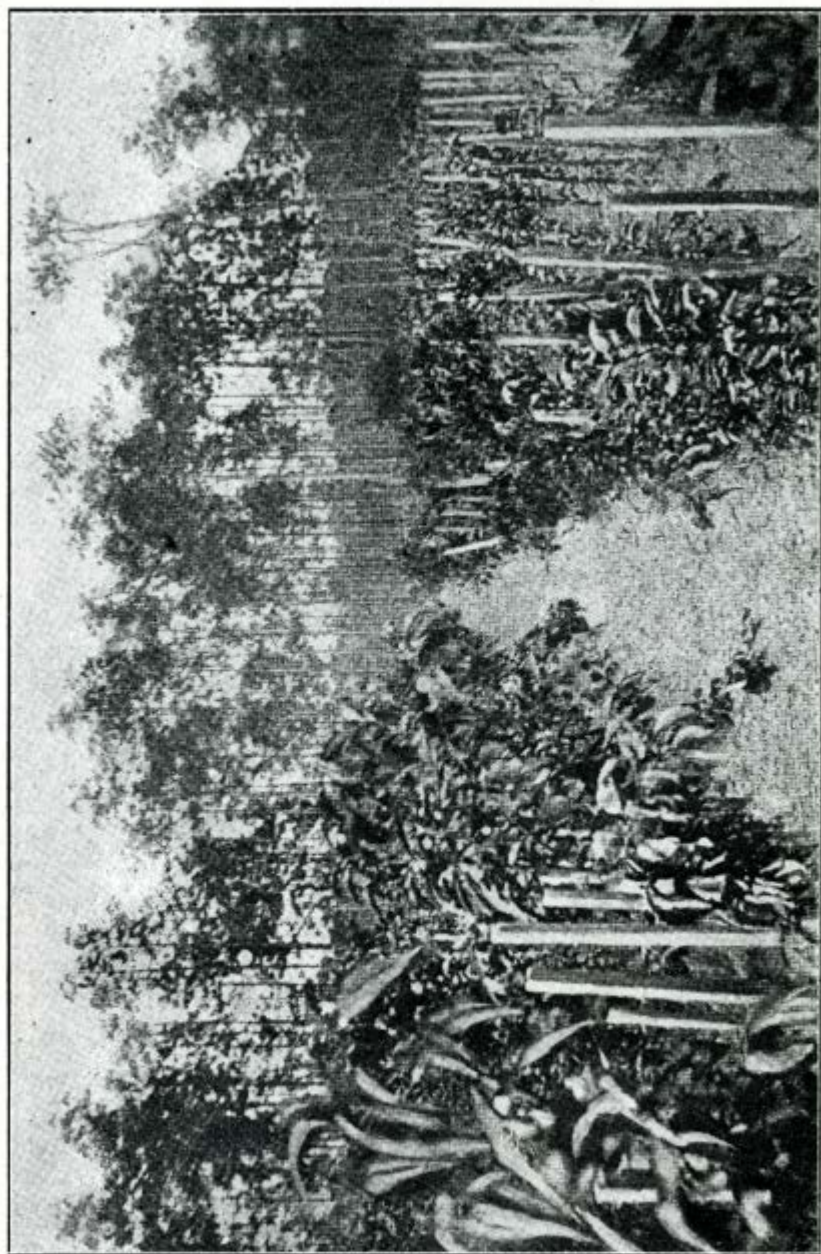
The best time to plant the grove is from the 15th of December to the 15th of February, though with proper handling it is safe to move a citrus tree at almost any time.

The trees should be purchased from a reliable nurseryman who will give trees true to name and budded on the right kind of stock and also give proper care in the taking up and packing so that they will arrive at their destination in good shape.

The stock should be of either sour or bitter sweet varieties, because they are by far the best adapted to our soils, being found growing wild in our hammocks; besides, they do not have foot rot, that dread disease that kills so many sweet seedlings.

As to choosing varieties, we will quote from two equally good authorities, both having had wide experience throughout the State for the past thirty years. One has looked more to the orange grove that is also a home and the other has more thoroughly experienced the setting of great groves as a financial investment.

The first says: "A very satisfactory proportion has been found by planting one-third of the grove to grapefruit, about one-half to oranges divided into early, medium and late varieties, and the remainder to Dancy tangerines. For the grapefruit the Duncan and the Indian River are good varieties, the former ripening the earlier,



Ideal Fertilizer (left) and another brand (right) used pound for pound the same forenoon and given the same subsequent care in Prof. Varn's nursery at Bartow.

while Parson Brown, Pineapple and Valencia oranges furnish fruit at three different seasons. There are many other varieties, but as we can not give space to all we simply name some of the best known."

The second tells us: "In planting a grove these days, when fruit is being handled in car-load lots more than in any other way, it would be the part of wisdom to select one good variety that is proving highly successful in the community, and let the entire grove be planted to that one variety.

"Among the diversified lands of Florida we have here one piece that is particularly suited to grapefruit, and there we have another piece that is admirably suited to the production of early oranges, such as Parson Brown, etc. On still another place we have a piece of land containing a high percentage of iron and lime and well adapted to the production of highly colored and perfect specimens of the Pineapple orange. On other soils we have the moisture-preserving and attracting nature that enables to grow and to hold over in perfect condition the Valencia Late or Hart's Late; and our varietal selection should be made with due consideration of all these points; and if the land is suitable for any one class of fruit, like those described above, do not diversify on any particular ten-acre tract."

In taking up the trees in the nursery the tops should be cut off about one and one-half or two feet above the ground and the roots should be cut to about a foot in length with the tap root one and one-half feet. This preserves the balance between root and top. Do not make the mistake of trying to keep too much top. The trees must be kept damp from the taking up until they are set in the ground. Most of the trees that are lost get their death stroke between the digging and the setting.

Pull the dirt from around the stake with a hoe, leaving the ground in the shape of an inverted saucer, the bottom edge being about a foot deep. Drive the stake into the ground to make a hole for the tap root. Place the trees in the hole and spread the roots evenly. Let the trees be an inch higher than they were in the nursery, for they will settle some. Pull a part of the dirt over the roots and pour in a bucket of water. Pull more dirt around the tree and pack tightly, moulding up a little in the shape of a saucer and pour on another bucket of water and then mulch to prevent evaporation.

The trees will need no further attention for several weeks unless the season is especially dry, in which case water should be given very sparingly until the rain comes. Too much water will cause the soil to sour and give the trees a serious set-back.

When the new growth starts give each tree a pound of **Ideal Fertilizer**, spreading it in a circle around but not too close to the tree and hoeing or raking it in. A little later mulch the tree circles and plant cowpeas in the middles to be used as described above. Never let mulching touch the tree trunks.

It is a mistake to try to "garden" in a grove. Give the land over to the interest of your trees entirely if you would have them prosper, and if you wish to garden take other land. It will pay you in the end.

As the young trees commence to grow keep off all sprouts below the bud and leave all above the bud unless they seem especially crowded, when it will be best to pinch off the tip of some of the shoots. Generally speaking the tree needs all the foliage it makes and knows much better how to grow a suitable top than does the one who interferes with its process.

Keep the trees well worked but never stir the ground when saturated with water or turn under any green vegetation, for it will sour the land and cause die-back and other diseases. Pull the mulching away from the trees in November. Renew when cold weather is over.

Give them another pound of **Ideal Fertilizer** about June 1st, and again September 1st. After that follow our general directions for fertilizing. We have treated this matter fully in our booklets, which we are glad to send on request, and besides this information we are always glad to give special advice as it is needed. The greater number of the profitable groves in the State have been made by the methods we advise and a liberal use of **Ideal Fertilizer**.

Free Books on all Florida Products Sent on Request.

SPECIAL EDITIONS

Key to Success: General principles of soil management, action of fertilizer materials, etc. Cloth bound, 50 cents; paper covers, 25 cents.

Citrus Culture for Profit.—This work covers citrus culture from selection of land to marketing, including latest methods of insect and disease control. Cloth bound, 50 cents; paper covers, 25 cents.

Control of Insects and Diseases in Grove, Garden and Field.—A complete treatise describing the different insects and diseases and means of prevention, control and remedy including crop rotation, recipes for making and mixing insecticides and fungicides, directions for their use and description of effective spraying implements. Cloth bound, 75 cents; paper covers, 50 cents.

Wilson & Toomer Fertilizer Co.

**Manufacturers of Ideal Fertilizers and
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JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

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